

What is claimed is:

5 *Sub A1* 1. A method related to discount coupons, comprising:
providing at least a first conventional discount coupon
that includes product information related to a first product;
inputting said first conventional discount coupon to an
apparatus used in outputting at least one exchange coupon;
controlling whether an exchange coupon should be
outputted by said apparatus in exchange for said inputted
first conventional discount coupon; and
outputting at least a first exchange coupon that includes
10 product information related to a second product, different
from said first product.

2. A method, as claimed in Claim 1, wherein:
said inputting step includes receiving identification
information to be associated with said first exchange coupon.

Sub A2 3. A method, as claimed in Claim 1, wherein:
said controlling step includes determining whether said
first conventional discount coupon is an exchange coupon.

4. A method, as claimed in Claim 3, wherein:
said controlling step includes not generating any
exchange coupon.

5. A method, as claimed in Claim 1, wherein:
said controlling step includes rendering said first
conventional ~~discount~~ coupon unredeemable.

6. A method, as claimed in Claim 1, wherein:
said controlling step includes checking whether magnetic ink is provided on any item inputted to said apparatus.

7. A method, as claimed in Claim 1, wherein:
said controlling step includes obtaining in a predetermined manner information associated with a plurality of products.

7.8. A method, as claimed in Claim 1, wherein:
said controlling step includes printing said second product information on said first exchange coupon.

9. A method, as claimed in Claim 1, wherein:
said controlling step includes printing said second product information on said first exchange coupon with said second product information being unrelated to said first product information on said first conventional discount coupon.

10. A method, as claimed in Claim 1, further comprising:
redeeming said first exchange coupon and obtaining cash for said first exchange coupon.

11. A method, as claimed in Claim 10, wherein:
said obtaining step includes printing a check including an amount corresponding to a discount associated with said first exchange coupon.

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12. A method for redeeming coupons, comprising:
providing a first coupon having first product
information;
inputting said first coupon to a check writer device;
5 reading said first product information using said check
writer device;
determining whether a check for a predetermined amount
should be written using said inputted first coupon; and
printing a check for an amount based on said first
10 product information.

12¹¹ 13. A method, as claimed in Claim 12¹¹, wherein:
said reading step includes scanning a bar code contained
on said first coupon.

13¹¹ 14. A method, as claimed in Claim 12¹¹, wherein:
said determining step includes checking whether said
first coupon is expired.

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15. A method, as claimed in Claim 12, wherein:
said determining step includes comparing said first
product information with stored information related to
predetermined products.

15¹⁴ 16. A method, as claimed in Claim 15¹⁴, further including:
inhibiting said printing step when a lack of comparison
is present between said first product information and said
stored information.

¹⁴~~17~~. A method, as claimed in Claim ¹⁴~~15~~, wherein:

said determining step includes keeping track of an amount when said comparing step results in a correspondence between said first product information and said stored information.

¹³~~18~~. A method, as claimed in Claim ¹¹~~12~~, wherein:

said inputting step includes providing a second coupon having second product information before said printing step.

¹⁸~~19~~. A method, as claimed in Claim ¹⁷~~18~~, wherein:

said determining step includes checking for completion of a transaction related to said first and second coupons.

¹⁹~~20~~. A method, as claimed in Claim ¹⁸~~19~~, wherein:

said printing step includes producing a check for a total amount using said first and second product information.

²⁰~~21~~. A method, as claimed in Claim ¹¹~~12~~, further comprising:

rendering said first coupon unacceptable for further redemption.

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comprising:

first means for receiving a conventional discount coupon;

second means responsive to said first means for
5 generating a first exchange coupon having first product
information;

third means for reading said first product information
from said first exchange coupon; and

fourth means responsive to said third means for
10 generating an amount based on said first exchange coupon
product information.

23. A system, as claimed in Claim 22, wherein:

said first means includes means for determining whether
an exchange coupon is being inputted.

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96 24. A system, as claimed in Claim 22, wherein:

said first means includes means for rendering said
conventional discount coupon unredeemable.

25. A system, as claimed in Claim 22, wherein:

said first means includes means for checking for a type
of ink.

26. A system, as claimed in Claim 22, wherein:

said first means includes slot means of a size for
receiving substantially any one of different sizes of
conventional discount coupons.

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27. A system, as claimed in Claim 22, wherein:

said first means includes means for reading product related information from said conventional discount coupon.

28. A system, as claimed in Claim 22, wherein:

said second means includes memory means for storing a plurality of information related to a number of different products, with one of said plurality of information being
5 selectable for generating an exchange coupon.

29. A system, as claimed in Claim 28, wherein:

said second means includes computer means for selecting product information in a predetermined manner.

256 30. A system, as claimed in Claim 28, 27 wherein:

said second means includes modem means for use in providing communication between said computer means and product information source means for updating said memory
5 means.

29 31. A system, as claimed in Claim 28, 27 wherein:

said fourth means includes means for reading said first product information associated with said first exchange coupon.

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32. A system, as claimed in Claim 22, wherein:

said fourth means includes means for comparing said first product information associated with said first exchange coupon with stored information to determine whether to generate said
5 amount.

33. A system, as claimed in Claim 22, wherein:

said fourth means includes means for printing a check
that includes said amount.

34. A system, as claimed in Claim 22, wherein:

said fourth means includes means for rendering said first
exchange coupon unacceptable for further redemption.

35. A system, as claimed in Claim 22, wherein:

said first product information of said first exchange
coupon includes at least one of the following: a location of
said first product in a store having said first product, an
5 expiration date associated with redemption of said first
exchange coupon, and sweepstakes information.

36. A system, as claimed in Claim 33, wherein:

said means for printing prints a second check using
random generator means.

37. A system, as claimed in Claim 22, wherein:

said fourth means includes means for receiving
identification information associated with said first exchange
coupon for storing said identification information in
5 association with said first product information.

38. An apparatus for redeeming a discount coupon comprising:

input means for receiving a first discount coupon having first product information;

5 scanning means for reading said first product information on said first discount coupon;

comparing means responsive to said first product information for determining whether an amount should be generated; and

10 printing means responsive to said comparing means for providing a check in an amount based on said first product information.

39. An apparatus, as claimed in Claim 38, wherein:

5 said printing means includes a check on which information is printed including said amount and in which the payor of said check amount is different from the seller of said first product.

40. An apparatus, as claimed in Claim 38, wherein:

said printing means includes means for positioning a check to be printed.

41. An apparatus, as claimed in Claim 38, further including:

means for rendering said first discount coupon unacceptable for further redemption.

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